

North Gresham Neighborhood Association

Fall 2010 Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2010

Opening:

The regular meeting of the North Gresham Neighborhood Association was called to order at 7:05pm on October 18, 2010 at Hartley Elementary School by Kati Arzeta, Association President.

Present:

Kati Arzeta (President)
Kathy Schwabe (Vice-President)
Erynn Woods (Secretary)

Members At Large:

Jeannie Stahly
Louise Masog
Tim Masog
Linda Parashos
Rebecca Butler
Misty Rier
Julie Nichols
Tim Youker
Michelle Black
Barb Wallace
Bob Ranney

A. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was unanimously approved as distributed. The agenda contained the following information;

7:00-7:15	Welcome, Introduction, Approval of Spring Minutes
7:15-7:45	Cathy Harrington with Representatives from the Broken Window Task Force
7:45-8:00	Open Discussion for Association 2011 Goals

- *What do you want from your neighborhood association?
- *What activities or programs are you interested in for 2011?
- *What level/form of communication do you prefer from your association?

B. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved as distributed.

C. Welcome and Introduction

President, Kati Arzeta welcomes new and returning members to the second meeting of the NGNA. Kati summarizes the agenda for this meeting and the goals we are hoping to achieve. She reminds the group that while concerns and complaints will always have a voice here, we hope to become a solution oriented group and work towards realistic solutions for our neighborhood.

D. Guest Speaker Panel

Cathy Harrington with the City of Gresham and the Broken Window Task Force introduces herself as well as the other members of the Broken Window Task Force.

*Rita Humphrey; Senior Code Inspector for the City of Gresham.
Rita.Humphrey@GreshamOregon.gov

*Marvin Madtson; Detective Sergeant Special Enforcement Team Gresham Police Department. 503-618-2109 Marvin.Madtson@GreshamOregon.gov

*Mark Krentz; Assistant Building Official for the City of Gresham.
Mark.Krenta@GreshamOregon.gov

*Darryl Godsby; Senior Rental Housing Inspector for the City of Gresham.
Darryl.Godsby@GreshamOregon.gov

Rita explains that the Broken Window Task Force is a multi-agency team formed by the mayor of Gresham in 2009 combining the efforts of police, fire, code compliance, and rental inspection to better manage housing and code enforcement as well as better enforce laws. The focus of the task force is currently on a portion of our neighborhood, therefore warranting a public discussion of what will happen and who will be affected. The boundaries within which they are focusing are; along 183rd between Halsey and Pacific. There were maps and inspection checklists available for all to take with them from the meeting. All affected landlords and tenants living within these boundaries have been notified via mail as to the task force's presence and mission. The question and answer portion of the discussion is as follows:

Question- Member at Large (hereafter referred to as MAL) alerts Rita to the fact that she is a landlord on 183rd and while she was notified of the inspections, none of her tenants were.

Answer- Rita acknowledges that some tenants may have been left out of the mass mailing and asks the MAL to contact her in order for her tenants to be notified.

Question- MAL would like to know how properties are chosen to be inspected.

Answer- Rita explains that generally a sample is randomly taken from the population of rental units in the city and those are inspected during the year. Also, the task force examines crime statistics and reported code violations and chooses a section of the city to focus on. In that section they choose more properties than they normally would.

Question- Kathy Schwabe would like to know what the criteria are with which homes are chosen for the task force.

Answer- There needs to be a record of violations over 60 days on the property or have 3 existing code violations on the premises. It also is affected by neighbors calling and reporting suspicious activity and records of police call-outs to the address.

Question- Kati Arzeta wants to know what to do/who to call about finding drug paraphernalia.

Answer- Rita and Mark list the number for code enforcement and ask anyone who finds drugs or drug paraphernalia to not touch it and call code enforcement. If it is in a park, call parks and recreation to remove.

Question- Kati Arzeta would also like to know who to call about noise violations including after hours parties, illegal fireworks etc.

Answer- Rita explains that the noise ordinance is as follows; 7am-10pm the noise must not exceed 60dec or cannot be heard clearly from 100ft. From 10pm-7am the noise must not exceed 50dec or cannot be clearly heard from 50ft. If you encounter a violation, please call the police non-emergency line giving the address of the violators if possible.

Marvin interjects that everyone should understand that in the scheme of priority, these calls are going to be very low and the city cannot guarantee a prompt response. When calling, request a follow-up call from an officer to ensure investigation and follow-up. If the officer finds a violation, the first citation will be a letter to the owner. The second violation will be an actual violation. Repeated violations can be taken up by the City Attorney for prosecution.

Question- Erynn Woods would like to know if we have knowledge or suspicion of a drug house or party house in our neighborhood, can we directly contact the Broken Window Task Force or what channels should one follow to report?

Answer- Marvin answers that he works in a special division with 3 agents specifically assigned to cases like these. He hands out business cards and encourages concerned citizens to contact his office and report homes for investigation. The group is looking forward to the early December implementation of tougher codes pertaining to the number of cars allowed on one property and tenant laws making it easier to enforce violations at homes like these.

Julie Nichols added that she has worked with Sergeant Hernandez on reporting and investigating houses along 192nd and the block has cleaned up considerably. She thanks the police department for the work that they have done.

Kathy Schwabe volunteers that the residents living along 183rd are excited for the improvement in their residences. Many of them have been living with code violations for a long time and haven't known what to do or who to call about it.

Question- Kati Arzeta would like to know what are some common code violations that the task force looks to correct as well as what are code violations that other home owners need to be aware of for example what is the code pertaining to grass and vegetation?

Answer- Rita explains that no grass may exceed 10" and no grass or vegetation may cover the sidewalk or impede walking in any way. There also must be clear vision around the corner for cars and bicycles.

Question- MAL would like to know whether the task force helps the owners clean up their property or just issue the citations?

Answer- There is a long process with plenty of time for owners to clean up their property long before being issued a violation. After the initial notice with expectations, and the initial inspection the owner has 30 days to correct the issues. Monetary violations only start after that. The initial charge is \$250 per violation and if this is ignored it can grow to \$750-\$1,000 a day. There is also a civil penalty phase that can issue a lien against a property. She explains that her office is understanding, though and after an owner cleans up the property, she often waives or reduces their fines. The city's goal is compliance, not money making.

Question- MAL wants to know what the options are after the notes/citations fail to inspire any change on a property?

Answer- There is a budget within the Gresham general fund to help clean up properties that have been abandoned. These properties have generally been neglected or foreclosed.

Follow-Up Question- So properties that are occupied and ignoring notices get away with it? Should we not bother even calling about them?

Answer- Mark encourages residents to still call; the more participation a neighborhood has, the city will do more. Also in the last year, there has been more compliance and better response seen.

Question- MAL wants to know if a lien is put against a property and payments are made, do those funds go back to help clean up more properties? If not, MAL believes they should be ear-marked for this.

Answer- No, the funds reclaimed from violations or liens are put back into the general fund. This is because the general fund is where we initially draw the funds for prosecution and enforcement in the first place. We always use more then we get back.

E. Goal Setting and Forecasting for 2011

Floor was taken by the Executive Board. Kati, Kathy, and Erynn explained that they hoped to bounce a few ideas for projects or goals around and see what the interest level of the group was. Also they hoped to gain better understanding as to the desired level and form of communication best for the association. The following projects are possible for 2011; neighborhood clean-up day, neighbor helping neighbor day, neighborhood-wide garage sale, park clean-up day.

There is general interest in these projects especially the neighbor helping neighbor program. The Association decides to pick a few projects at participating neighbor's houses and work together to get them finished. These projects might include, painting a curb, cutting down trees in the front yard, cleaning the grounds of a church or other projects that the owner cannot accomplish on their own. This will be a great step in the direction of a neighborhood-wide clean up day. Sherwin Williams has offered their parking lot as a disposal site for hazardous materials (paint cans, bug spray, batteries) and the city has offered to donate dumpsters to be placed throughout the neighborhood for a day of free disposal. These will be utilized for the neighborhood-wide clean-up day.

The final topic discussed was about communication between the association and its members. After some discussion, it was decided that a goal for 2011 would be to apply for a matching grant through the city of Gresham to start a North Gresham Neighborhood Association website. In the meantime, a quarterly newsletter will be made and emailed to members to keep everyone updated. Also the city issued Neighborhood Connections monthly newsletter will be forwarded to association members.

F. Announcements

The city of Gresham is holding its Fall Quarterly Neighborhood Safety Forum on Saturday, November 20, 2010 at City Hall. It will be held from 9:00am-Noon. On the agenda is; updates from the Gresham Police Department, preview of the crime statistics now available to the public, Gresham Police Department's new online reporting system: CopLogic, and neighborhood watch Q&A. There will light refreshments available. For more information, please contact; Kelle Landavazo 503-618-2567.

Adjournment:

Meeting was adjourned at 8:17 by President Kati Arzeta. The next general meeting will be some Monday in early February at Hartley Elementary School. Once the date and time have been confirmed, and announcement will be sent out.

Minutes submitted by:

Erynn Woods, Secretary